

JAN 12 2006

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January 9, 2006

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James M. Beck  
General Manager

Amelia T. Minaberrigarai  
General Counsel

Mr. Lester Snow  
Director  
Department of Water Resources  
P.O. Box 942836  
Sacramento, CA 94236-0001

RE: South Delta Improvements Program Environmental Impact Report

Dear Director Snow,

The Kern County Water Agency (KCWA) supports the Department of Water Resources' (DWR) efforts to implement the South Delta Improvement Project (SDIP) as one component of the overall Conveyance Program described in the CalFED Bay-Delta Program Record of Decision. KCWA believes that the timely implementation of the SDIP will increase permitted pumping rates at Banks Pumping Plant and will allow DWR to strike the appropriate balance between increasing the state's water supplies and protecting its Delta fishery.

In 2000, the state and federal governments initiated the CalFED Bay-Delta Program to manage the Bay-Delta's water resources and ecosystem. A unique collaboration of interests supported the plan including environmental organizations, water agencies, business interests, farmers, and state and federal water and fish agencies. The SDIP is the next step forward in this long-term planning effort for the Bay-Delta.

DWR recently issued a draft Environmental Impact Report for the SDIP to support installation of permanent operable gates and the potential operation of those gates to increase water supplies. KCWA staff is reviewing that document and will provide comments to DWR in early February. While we expect to provide you with significant comments, our comments do not diminish our general support for full implementation of the SDIP. We urge you to move forward with the necessary environmental documentation and subsequent implementation of this important project.

Currently, the state is constrained in its ability to use surplus water supplies that occur at times when environmental impacts are low. The infrastructure to move the water is already in place, but until SDIP is approved, the state's water managers cannot fully use the existing system. The SDIP will increase the average amount of water pumped from the Delta by just 3-5 percent. More significantly, SDIP will provide the flexibility to shift the timing of water deliveries to periods when surplus is available and it is environmentally safe to do so. SDIP is an ideal option for California to advance — it will not require building a new project or the construction of major new infrastructure.

661/634-1400

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Mr. Lester Snow  
January 9, 2006  
Page 2 of 2

JAN 12 2006

051

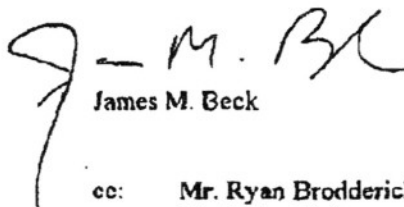
And, funding for the program has already been secured through passage of voter approved bonds in 2000 (Proposition 13).

The SDIP is supported by a broad, statewide coalition of water, agriculture, business, planning organizations, and local government officials including the Association of California Water Agencies, State Water Contractors, California Chamber of Commerce, California Business Properties Association and the Western Growers Association.

The Kern County Water Agency strongly supports the SDIP and encourages all stakeholders to help advance this critically needed project.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



James M. Beck

cc: Mr. Ryan Brodderick,  
Mr. Mike Chrisman  
Mr. Joe Grindstaff  
Mr. Kirk Rodgers  
Mr. Dan Skopec